

House Resolution

No. 13

Introduced by Assembly Member Yamada

May 3, 2011

House Resolution No. 13—Relative to Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Awareness Month.

1 WHEREAS, Elder and vulnerable adult abuse is a crime and a
2 serious and growing crisis in California; and

3 WHEREAS, Not a day goes by without reports of horrific cases
4 of abuse or exploitation of older or vulnerable adults; and

5 WHEREAS, Throughout the United States, 10,000 people a day
6 are turning 65 years of age; and

7 WHEREAS, One in every eight individuals over 65 years of
8 age is living with Alzheimer’s disease and one in every 76
9 Californians has a disorder on the Autism Spectrum. The rapid
10 growth of special populations like these that are in need of
11 enhanced protection will further challenge the overwhelmed
12 vulnerable adult protection system; and

13 WHEREAS, Older and vulnerable adults may be impacted by
14 any of a constellation of physical, mental, pharmaceutical, or
15 medical influences that could render them unable to self-advocate,
16 to report, or to testify; and

17 WHEREAS, At least 2 percent, and as many as 10 percent, of
18 the elder and vulnerable adult population in California are abused,
19 molested, injured, exploited, or scammed each year; and

20 WHEREAS, The incidence of abuse and exploitation of the
21 developmentally disabled population is shocking. Over 80 percent
22 of women with developmental disabilities and over 30 percent of

1 men with developmental disabilities are sexually abused at least
2 once during their lifetime; and

3 WHEREAS, Current estimates suggest that as few as one in 14
4 cases of elder and vulnerable adult abuse is reported, including
5 fewer than one in 25 incidents of financial abuse, because the
6 victims are ashamed, hopeless, intimidated, or afraid of the abuser;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, A comprehensive central data repository of all
9 child abuse investigations has been in existence since 1965, but
10 no similar repository exists for investigations of crimes against
11 frail, elder, and vulnerable adults; and

12 WHEREAS, Even in the year 2011, with a booming and
13 exponentially expanding population of elder and vulnerable adults,
14 the state of California does not collect comprehensive data on
15 abuse cases, reports, or investigations. This inhibits the
16 government's ability to make informed decisions about improving
17 the existing reporting system, enhancing protections, or lending
18 law enforcement the tools necessary to ensure justice; and

19 WHEREAS, The lack of statewide elder abuse statistics prevents
20 policymakers from measuring the extent of these crimes and
21 tragedies. The lack of a single point of contact to report an incident
22 of abuse of and elder or vulnerable adult contributes to the current
23 climate of under reporting; and

24 WHEREAS, Elder and vulnerable adult abuse may be physical,
25 emotional, sexual, or fiduciary, and consists of crimes that know
26 no boundaries of economic or educational status, gender, race,
27 ethnicity, or geographic location; and

28 WHEREAS, Subtle indicators that abuse may be occurring
29 include bruises or pressure marks, unexplained withdrawal from
30 normal activities, a sudden change in alertness, unusual depression,
31 sudden changes in financial situations, strained or tense
32 relationships, or frequent arguments between a caregiver and a
33 client. Recognizing these signs is the first step toward the
34 prevention of elder and vulnerable adult abuse; and

35 WHEREAS, Elders and vulnerable adults have the right to live
36 safely in the least restrictive environment, whether in their homes
37 or health care facilities, and to enjoy an optimum quality of life
38 while being protected from all forms of abuse; and

39 WHEREAS, Private citizens and public agencies must work to
40 combat crime and violence against elders and vulnerable adults,

1 particularly in the face of continued funding reductions in vital
2 services; and

3 WHEREAS, All Californians are strongly encouraged to report
4 suspected abuse of an elder or vulnerable adult by calling their
5 local adult protective services agency, Long-Term Care
6 Ombudsman, law enforcement, or emergency services agencies;
7 now, therefore, be it

8 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California*, That the
9 Assembly proclaims and acknowledges the month of May 2011
10 and every year thereafter, as the Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse
11 Awareness Month; and be it further

12 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
13 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.